

FrontLine Employee

A newsletter from the Employee Advisory Service (EAS)

Call EAS: Olympia (360) 753-3260 Seattle (206) 281-6315 Spokane (509) 482-3686

Web: <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/eas.html>

Low-Cost Health Insurance for Kids

Do you have uninsured children or grandkids 18 or younger? If the answer is yes and the family's annual income is less than \$34,100 (for a family of four), you may qualify for low- to no-cost health insurance. This is a federally-sponsored government program administered by the state. This is not welfare. It is a special program authorized by Congress to help families pay for doctor visits, prescription medicines, hospitalization, and more. For more information, call **1-877-KIDS-NOW**.



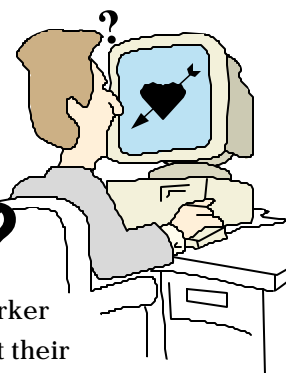
Ready for the Group

If you are thinking about professional counseling, you probably have a one-on-one relationship with a therapist in mind. Don't rule out group therapy as a possible means to achieving your goal. The skilled facilitation of a group of clients seeking to conquer similar issues can be a powerful and exciting approach to personal change. Group therapy is typically less costly, and meetings usually last for an hour and a half versus an hour for individual sessions. There are many types of therapy groups. Not every personal issue is suitable for group therapy, but EAS can help you decide if a group would be good to consider.



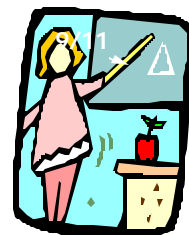
Is That... Sexual Harassment?

Can you interact with a fellow worker and make polite comments about their dress, what they did over the weekend, or even participate in mild flirtations without having to worry about such acts being considered sexual harassment? Before taking the first step, stop and ask yourself: "Would a reasonable person object to this?" Consider these three basic rules in deciding whether your words or actions could be sexually harassing: 1) Use common courtesy and common sense. 2) Pay close attention to a person's reaction to what you say and do. 3) When in doubt, don't. If you have to wonder, it's probably not appropriate. Know your agency's policy on sexual harassment.



Last Year's Stress Lessons

A study found that 17 percent of U.S. residents living outside of New York City reported symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder two months after the 9/11 attacks. Six percent were still reporting symptoms six months later. Looking deeper, researchers found that people who did not cope as well with the event were more likely to pretend it didn't happen, think of something else, or stay distracted. The lesson on coping with distressful events is to be proactive rather than giving up. Struggling to understand or make meaning of a traumatic event – even if from a distance – may prevent negative effects on health down the road.



JAMA: Longitudinal Study of Psychological Responses to September 11.; Univ. California Irvine; Lori Brandt; lbrandt@uci.edu

Depression Medication

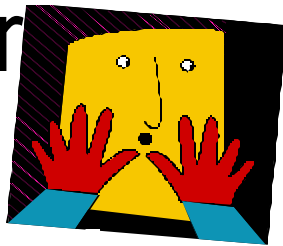
Get the Instructions!

About 75% of physicians say that, when they prescribe anti-depressant medication, they tell their patients to take it for at least six months. However, when asked, more than half of these patients say they were not given instructions on how long they should take their anti-depressant medication. Anti-depressants can be lifesavers, but they don't work overnight. If you and your physician are talking about medication for depression, be sure to discuss the period of time you will be taking the medication, its effects, and when you should anticipate results. Patients who don't have such a discussion are more likely to stop using medication that could have been helpful in the long run.

Source: Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol. 288, No. 11, Sept. 2002.



Bracing for Holiday Blues



The holidays are supposed to be a time for joy and celebration – full of wonderful foods, social occasions, religious and spiritual enrichment, or just plain fun. However, many people experience holiday blues. One common complaint of those who suffer from this form of depression is their awareness of the expectations surrounding the season and their inability or lack of desire to meet those expectations. Personal health, relationship issues, past losses, isolation, financial circumstances, and the pure stress of the season can all be factors that contribute to holiday blues. EAS can help you find the support you need during this or any other time of the year.

Wise Moves For Night Owls



If you have been a shift worker for awhile, you have probably discovered ways to balance your work and personal lives. No one has to tell you that your stress is unique. If you are new to shift work, it is important to know that adapting to night work while keeping a harmonious personal life is possible, but takes a conscious effort. Whether you are new to shift work or not, consider whether the following five life-stress warning signs are continuing:

- 1) Since starting shift work, a family member complains that everything is now on his or her shoulders.
- 2) You continually feel guilty about your job and its impact on your family.
- 3) You are drinking in the morning after getting off from work with the rationale that "This is like coming home from an evening job and having a drink."
- 4) You are not able to sleep, and those in your home don't seem to care.
- 5) You are still waiting for quality time with family members to happen naturally, but it never does.

Consider EAS as a source for trouble-shooting these or other issues.

Fatigue Fighting Food Facts



There is a lot to know about food and its relationship to the prevention of fatigue. Because chronic fatigue illnesses are common, nutrition research is plentiful. Here are a few key tips if you are looking to fight the "three o'clock energy droop":

- 1) Try vitamin C. Vitamin C is essential for adrenal gland functioning. Under stress, these glands emit hormones that fight fatigue. Try supplements and natural foods.
- 2) Drink more water. Fatigue can be an early symptom of dehydration. Drink water periodically during the day, even if you aren't thirsty.
- 3) Go easy on the coffee in the morning. It can reduce your desire to eat breakfast. By lunchtime, it could be 18 hours or more since your last meal — definitely an energy zapper. You need most of your calories during the day when you are most active. Appetite suppression can also contribute to overeating at dinner.
- 4) Snacking in the afternoon is good, but think fruits, vegetables, low-sodium juices, and foods with whole grains.

Adapted from Eat to Beat Fatigue by Joan Slagle Blake, M.S., R.D.